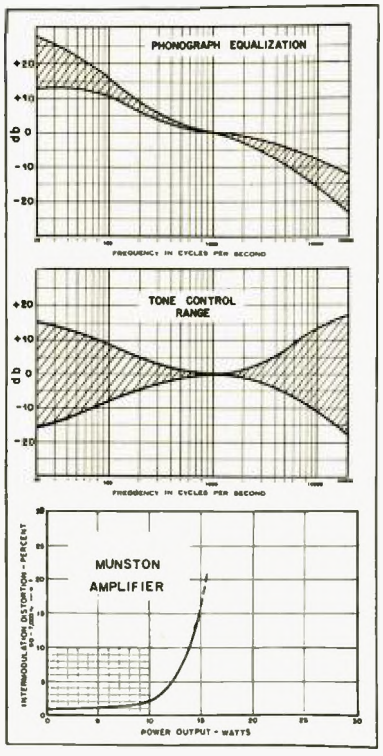
12-Watt Munston Amplifier-Preamplifier—Miratwin MST-2D Magnetic Pickup Cartridge—Hermon Hosmer Scott 311 FM Tuner



NEWCOMERS to the hi-fi fold who have begun to collect records since the introduction of the long-playing microgroove type in 1948 have increasingly less need for a variety of phonograph equalization curves in their equipment than the old timer who has been collecting records for many years. It has long been the prediction of this observer that when there was sufficient standardization of recording characteristics there would appear an amplifier which was designed to accommodate the basic curve—such as the RIAA has become, practically—with such other variations as might be required being supplied by "touching up" with the bass and treble tone controls. With the introduction of the 12-watt Munston Amplifier, this department modestly admits, "We told you so." In all seriousness, however, the design philosophy of this amplifier offers several features which make it possible for the music lover to fulfill his desires for a suitable amplifier at a relatively low cost.

While there is no denying the need for a wide variety of recording characteristic curves in an amplifier to be used by the veteran record collector who has all kinds of records perhaps dating back to the twenties, it is equally certain that a collection of LP records can be played with a reasonably close match of characteristics provided the amplifier has a properly adjusted phono curve built into it, and suitable flexibility of the tone controls. AUDIO has long maintained that exact certainty of the equalization to published curves was not the panacea that it would appear to be—there are too many other variables. Carried to extremes, the "hypercritical" listener might insist on slavish duplication of all possible curves. He would then set the controls to correspond to the curve allegedly employed by the recording company in making the original tape and sit back and listen, even though the music didn't sound "right." If we may assume that the listener's system were perfect, this might be a possible solution. But there is always the possibility that the monitoring speaker in the mixing booth could be deficient in bass, for example, and the engineer would therefore boost the bass in the recording so it sounded right *in his monitoring speaker*, which would make it overbassy in a proper system. Or perhaps the microphone position was not ideal, and compensations were introduced to make it sound like the producer wanted it. In any case, the listener doesn't *have* to listen to it with the specified curve—if it is not exactly to his liking, he should make changes in his settings until it is.

The Munston amplifier has only one phonograph position on its selector switch—a position which gives a medium amount of bass boost and a fixed rolloff of approximately 9 db at 10,000 cps. On the TREBLE control, four designations are indicated—points where the control should be set for four specific curves. Similarly, the phono position introduces a fixed amount of bass boost, and marked points indicate where the BASS control should be set to give a curve corresponding to the markings. With this type of equalization, the listener is encouraged to "cheat" the controls slightly in the vicinity of the indicated point if he feels that the reproduction is not perfect—

Fig. 1. (left). Performance curves for the 12-watt Munston Amplifier. Fig. 2 (below). Over-all schematic of the Munston.

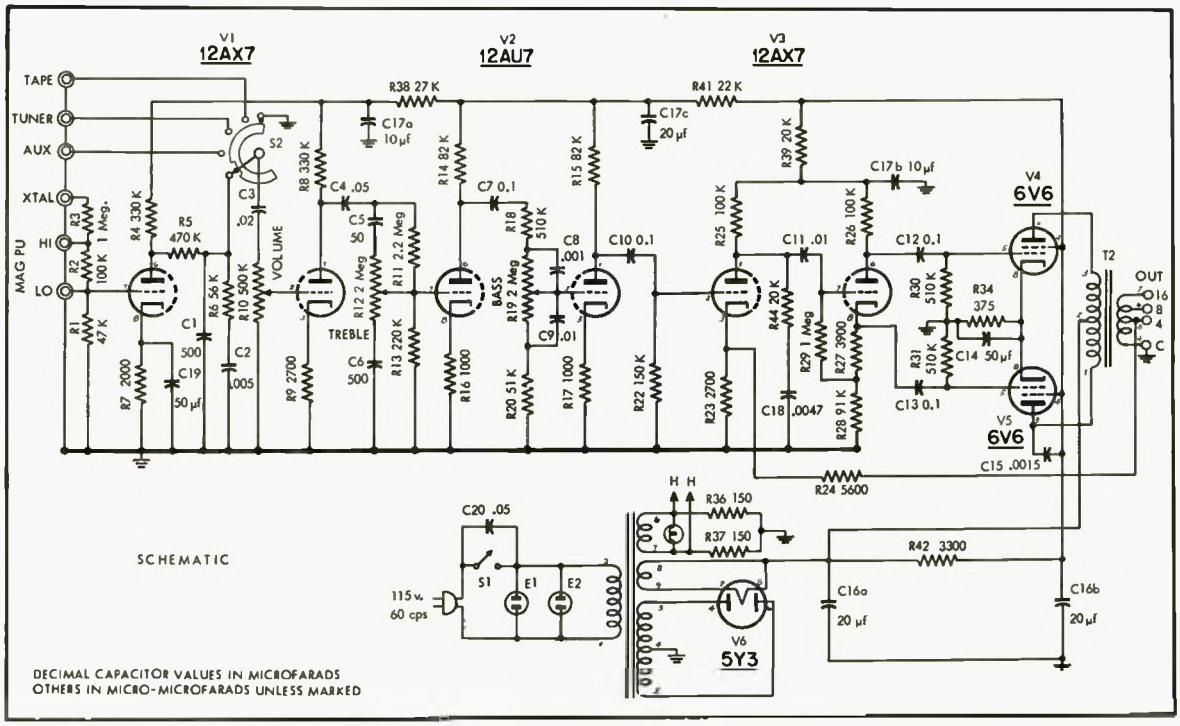


Fig. 3. Satin black case and brushed brass escutcheon present "decorator-type" appearance to the Munston Amplifier.

assuaging his conscience, if he must, with the excuse that "The knobs are probably not set right anyhow."

The response curves obtainable from the unit in the phonograph position are shown in the upper section of *Fig.* 1 over the range of indicated curves—further equalization may be obtained by going beyond the indicated points, both above and below the shaded portion. The tone-control action —in reference to any of the three high-level inputs—is shown in the center section, and the IM distortion is shown in the lower section. *Figure* 2 shows the schematic of the amplifier, and *Fig.* 3 portrays the external appearance of the unit, which measures 11¾ in. wide by 9¾ in. deep by 4 in. high.

Performance

Sensitivity of the amplifier is relatively high, with an input of 2.4 mv giving the standard 1-watt output on phonograph, and an input of 25 mv giving the same output on the high-level inputs, both with the volume control at maximum. Hum and noise was measured at 66 db below 1 watt at normal settings of the volume control and with the tone controls flat. Strangely enough—but a plus feature rather than minus—the hum and noise measured the same whether at phono or high-level settings of the selector switch, both inputs being shorted.

Three phono input jacks are provided—accommodating both low- and high-level magnetic cartridges and crystals or other amplitude-responsive pickups. Three high-level jacks accommodate tuner, tape, and auxiliary inputs, as indicated on the selector switch. 4-, 8-, and 16-ohm outputs are provided, and the amplifier is stable with practically any type of output load. Power consumption is 62 watts at the 1-watt output.

For the music lover who is looking for a maximum of simplicity and sufficient ease of operation that the distaff side of the family can soon learn to feel comfortable with the "system," the new Munston seems to be a practical answer, for it does give good listening quality and it is easy to operate. Added to this is a neat brushed brass escutcheon fronting a satin black case which provides adequate ventilation and furnishes the *is* for the beauty that *does*.